

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7237

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1967

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, SU, UR, CU

SUBJECT: NIMEIRI COMMENTS ON SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN HORN

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. AT CLOSE OF MAY 1 LABOR DAY SPEECH NIMEIRI MADE HIS MOST RECENT PRONOUNCEMENT ON SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN HORN. ALTHOUGH STATEMENT REAFFIRMS BASIC OPPOSITION HE HAS SO OFTEN EXPRESSED IN PAST, TONE NOTICEABLY MORE MEASURED THAN HIS OTHER RECENT STATEMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID QUOTE SUDAN FULLY AWARE SOVIET UNION IS INFLUENTIAL SUPER POWER WHICH WE CANNOT ELBOW ASIDE OR FORGET ABOUT. SUDAN WAS AND STILL IS EXPECTING SOVIET UNION TO PLAY ITS PART AND INVEST ITS CAPABILITIES FOR RESTORATION OF PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE. UNQUOTE

2. ON CUBA NIMEIRI SAID QUOTE WE RECENTLY LISTENED TO HAS 15 THOUSAND STRONG IN ETHIOPIA ALONE. HE STATED CUBA STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO WHO WILL NOT TAKE PART IN CONFLICT BETWEEN ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND ERITREAN REVOLUTION. IF STATEMENTS WERE CONFIRMED, THIS WILL NO

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DOUBT, PREPARE SUITABLE ATMOSPHERE FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN ETHIOPIAN AND ERITREAN BROTHERS, BECAUSE THIS DIALOGUE WILL REPLACE AGE OLD STRUGGLE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. WE HOPE TO HEAR SOON THAT SOVIET-SUPPORTED CUBAN FORCES HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM ERITREA AND THAT ETHIOPIANS HAVE UNDERSTOOD MILITARY ACTION WILL NOT SOLVE ANY PROBLEM AND INSTEAD THAT THEY ADOPT DIALOGUE WHICH WE INITIATED

AND OFFERED AS ONLY MEANS FOR RESTORATION OF PEACE IN
THIS REGION. UNQUOTE END UNCLASSIFIED.

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3. COMMENT: NIMEIRI SEEMS GENUINELY INTRIGUED BY CASTRO'S
RELATIVE RESTRAINT DURING MENGISTU VISIT TO HAVANA. NO
DOUBT HE REMAINS WARY AND SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIETS AND CUBANS
NEXT DOOR IN ETHIOPIA, BUT LABOR DAY REMARKS SUGGEST HE
AT LEAST SOMEWHAT HOPEFUL AS WELL THAT POSSIBILITY EXISTS
CUBANS WILL AVOID COMBAT ROLE IN ERITREA.
BERGUS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED TO HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE.

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NNN

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